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Breast Cancer Preventative Care

One out of every eight individual women in the United States will develop breast cancer. In New York State alone there were an estimated to be nearly 15,000 new women diagnosed with breast cancer over the course of 2016. 2,600 women in New York State will die as a result of breast cancer this year. Access to quality preventative care is critical to the success of breast treatment further down the line if an individual develops breast cancer.

Scope of the Problem

Breast cancer effects thousands of New Yorker's a year. It is said "everyone knows someone who has battled breast cancer", while white females in the United States are more likely to be diagnosed with breast cancer early, African American women and other minorities are more likely to be diagnosed later in the cancer's progression. (BCDR 2016.) On average, nearly 150 men will also be diagnosed with breast cancer in New York State this year. Breast cancer is a sociological, as well as, a medical problem because it impacts the lives of millions of individuals, and has disproportionally effected Africa American and minority women. Neither the government nor the public can solve the medical problems, but many actions can be taken to end sociological, financial, and political issues of coverage for preventative care.

Cancer screenings are the most effective way to prevent death especially with preliminary screenings. Early detection tests can find mutated cells within people who have no signs of sickness. Regular and annual mammograms are highly recommended for women over the age of forty to catch breast cancer.

While women ages 55 and older should receive mammograms every two years.

Past Policy

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), prior to "Obama Care" all states, except for Utah, required insurance companies to reimburse their clients for their copays for mammograms. However, clients still need to have the funds up-front for their copays in order to receive their services. Additionally, in 28 states across the United States, insurance companies are presently required to reimburse clients for reconstructive surgeries and surgical procedures related to mastectomies for the treatment of breast cancer.

In states, such as Delaware and Connecticut, there are specific funds dedicated to breast cancer research. These funds are accrued through the tobacco taxes in their respective states (NCCDPHP



2000). Additionally, Delaware offers an option on individual tax returns to contribute a dollar or more to the fund from their returns. Similarly, New York State also has the option on income taxes to contribute to State funds designated for breast cancer programs and research opportunities.

In Indiana, high schools, regardless if they are public or private, are required to include education focusing on breast cancer. Louisiana also requires public junior and senior high schools to provide instruction to all female students in the proper procedure for breast self-examination (NCCDPHP 2000). In addition to this verbal instruction, the State of New Jersey requires all gynecologists and any medical office who performs breast exams to have written literature in both Spanish and English in an information pamphlet available for their clients (NCCDPHP 2000).

In New York State, prior to 2016 there were three major components of regulation that impacted breast cancer treatment. First, all high schools in New York State are required to complete breast cancer self-examination techniques in school in required health courses. Second, insurance companies are required to reimburse clients for breast reconstruction surgeries. Third, Insurance

companies are also required to reimburse clients for the bills associated with hospital stays as designated by a patients treating physician.

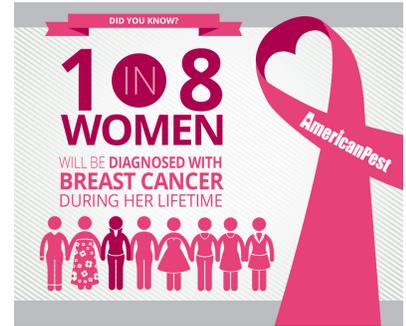


Current Policy

The “No Excuses” law sponsored by Senate Majority Leader John J Flanagan (R) launched the most aggressive breast cancer screening legislation in the country as it specifically regulates the various institutions involved in treatment. The bill was signed into law by New York State Governor

Andrew Cuomo in June of 2016. The legislation is widely supported by both Democrats and Republicans.

This bill aims to address various gaps in insurance coverage and close them. It specifically aims to the eliminate copays and ensure that there is adequate time for women to get screenings. The law also eliminates the use of deductibles for breast cancer preventative care as well, and effectively eliminates all fees which are associated with diagnostic imaging.



All medical service facilities that offer breast cancer screenings are required to have a number of extended hours in the evening or on the weekend each week to allow people time to access their services for preventive screenings. (ONYGAC 2016). All New York State employees are allowed four hours a year of leave dedicated solely to breast cancer screenings. (ONYSGAC 2016).

For those without insurance, the New York State Cancer Services offers free breast cancer screenings and diagnostics. This service is available to women who are forty years of age or older or are at risk for breast cancer according to a registered physician. If an individual does not have insurance and breast cancer is found, they are eligible for the Medicaid Cancer Treatment Program which covers the full cost of treatment and reconstruction. In New York State, insurance policies are required by law to cover the treatment of breast cancer (BCR 2016), including Medicaid.

Policies that encourage preventative care and provide access to those without insurance are vital in the fight against breast cancer. If well utilized, these services and policies will save lives.

Policy Options

Outreach and Education

In order to implement these policies in New York State, government agencies and NGO's need to work together to bring attention to the public about what resources they have available. They also need to ensure that proper curriculum especially concerning the breast cancer education is effectively being taught in schools.

Taxes for Research

Another alternative to increase the effectiveness of breast cancer legislation is the use of taxes for research. This would provide New York with a stream of revenue that would be used for scientific research and innovations to help find the cure for breast cancer and make overall treatments more effective. This is important because it will decrease the death rate in NYS.

Community Outreach Funds

In Connecticut, bill Conn. Gen. Stat. SS 12-743, 19 (A)- 32 (B) established a separate breast cancer research and education account within the state budget for funds to be used for education and community service programs (NCCDPHP 2000). These programs are manifested through the Connecticut Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (DPH 2016).

Key Organizations

Collaborating with both state and key organizations is essential to finding the cure for breast cancer. It also is important to provide support services to patients and their families.

- **Susan G Komen Foundation:**
The mission of the Susan G Komen Foundation is to save lives by meeting the most critical needs in our communities and investing in breakthrough research to prevent and cure breast cancer.
- **American Cancer Society:**
Is the nationwide, community-based, voluntary health organization dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by preventing cancer, saving lives, and diminishing suffering from cancer, through research, education, advocacy, and service.
- **National Breast Cancer Coalition (NBCC):** The NBCC is a nationwide advocacy network whose efforts have effectively provided \$2.89 billion of new federal dollars for breast cancer research. The efforts of the NBCC have attracted more than 46,232 research proposals.
- **Center for Disease Control:**
The CDC works 24/7 to protect America from health, safety and security threats, both foreign and in the U.S. Whether diseases start at home or abroad, are chronic or acute, curable or preventable, human error or deliberate attack, CDC fights disease and supports communities and citizens to do the same. The CDC increases the health security of our nation. As the nation's health protection agency, CDC saves lives and protects people from health threats. To accomplish our mission, CDC conducts critical science and provides health information that protects our nation against expensive and dangerous health threats, and responds when these arise.

Glossary

Diagnostic Imaging: is the technique and process of creating visual representations of the interior of a body for clinical analysis and medical intervention, as well as visual representation of the function of some organs or tissues (physiology).

Step Therapy: requires a patient to first try a preferred (often generic alternative) drug prior to receiving coverage for the originally prescribed drug.

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Community Policy Institute

The Community Policy Institute builds capacity surrounding policy within the Capital Region. We provide researched-based policy information to our community partners who use the information to modify best practices and advocate for policies that will further the development and effectiveness of direct community engagement.

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